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LEBO BEAT

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What makes Mt. Lebanon so special?

Four Mt. Lebanon residents show how kindness and community make their hometown one of a kind By Lauren Cefalo Moore

With roughly six square miles and about 34,000 residents, Mt. Lebanon is a walkable community lined with trees and sidewalks. Neighborhood children attend award-winning schools, and people of all ages enjoy social events and recreational programs celebrating music, arts, sports and more.

Just six miles from downtown Pittsburgh, Mt. Lebanon combines architecture, history and culture with trendy shops, hip restaurants and locally owned businesses. Add in low crime rates and a highly regarded hospital, and it's easy to see why so many refer to Mt. Lebanon as "The Bubble."

Lebo really does have it all. It's idyllic — a realtor's dream. It's a unicorn. And yet, as great as all this is, what truly makes Mt. Lebanon so special can be summed up in two words: our people.

Meet the Neighbors

Eric Linn has more than 30 years of experience in energy and commercial real estate. He could be retired, spending his days poolside in Florida with his wife, Lynn. Instead, guided by his faith, Eric uses his background and expertise to help others.

In 2024, he co-founded AgriWater, a nonprofit organization with a mission to create lasting change



Eric Linn in Uganda. (Photo provided)

across Uganda by equipping farmers with the skills, tools and opportunities to thrive year-round. Through a hands-on demonstration farm, Eric and his team

teach sustainable farming, share best practices, provide essentials such as seeds and irrigation equipment, and form partnerships with government and

private entities to support agricultural development in Eastern Uganda.

Eric has personally met with Ugandan leaders and
Continued on page 6

Four Elected to Mt. Lebanon School Board, Bringing Experience and Enthusiasm

Incumbent Melinda Berdyck joins new directors Becki Campanaro, Tim Clougherty and Joy Givens in continuing the district's focus on financial stability and student success

By Stacey Reibach

In the recent school board election, voters in Mt. Lebanon reelected Melinda Berdyck to a new term and elected new school directors Becki Campanaro, Tim Clougherty and Joy Givens. Each brings great enthusiasm as well as many valuable skills to their role.

Director Berdyck and her husband moved to Mt. Lebanon 19 years ago and are proud parents of three daughters (classes of 2022, 2025 and 2028). She has an undergraduate degree in education and a master's in

speech-language pathology, working the past 12 years in that field. She was appointed to fill a vacancy on the board in 2022 and was elected to a two-year term in 2023.

She says, "Doing this job requires an aptitude for a quick learning curve. I stand in a position of having figured out the landscape of school leadership, and I'm ready to continue leading. I don't only hit the ground running; I keep on the pace toward progress that we have set with no lag time."

Director Berdyck says one of the pressing issues the district faces includes "continuing a path to financial recovery that will be

measured by an increase in unassigned fund reserves without loss of staff or services." She also notes that Mt. Lebanon has aging athletic structures that will require updates in the near term and that financing them responsibly will be a very important decision.

Director-elect Campanaro and her husband relocated to Mt. Lebanon in 2011 "primarily because of the strong, decades-long reputation of the school district consistently ranking among the top districts in the state of Pennsylvania."

Professionally, Campanaro has more than 20 years of experience working in higher education,



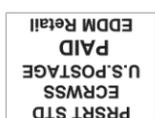
From left, Mt. Lebanon School Board members Melinda Berdyck, Tim Clougherty, Joy Givens and Becki Campanaro. (Photo provided)

helping students navigate their academic paths. She has an extensive résumé of volunteering, including with the Mt. Lebanon Junior Women's Club, numerous positions within the PTA,

and she recently joined the board of the Mt. Lebanon Foundation for Education.

Campanaro thinks that the district's most pressing challenge is its budget.

Continued on page 3



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Introducing the *Lebo Beat*: Mt. Lebanon's own voice

A hometown newspaper created by and for the people who make this community special

By Brion Palmer

Welcome to the very first edition of the *Lebo Beat*.

This paper was born from a simple idea: Mt. Lebanon deserves a newspaper as distinctive as the community itself. Every story, every photograph, and every page will focus entirely on the people, places, and spirit that make Mt. Lebanon such a remarkable place to live.

From our neighborhoods and schools to our local businesses, events, and history, the *Lebo Beat* will shine a light on what makes this town feel like home. Unlike regional publications, our coverage begins and ends here—100% devoted to Mt. Lebanon.

In a first-of-its-kind launch, the *Lebo Beat* will arrive in every residential mailbox in Mt. Lebanon through the U.S. Postal Service, ensuring that every household can be part of this shared experience.

This paper was founded by longtime residents after countless conversations with neighbors, friends, and business leaders who wanted to see a publication focused solely on our town.

Everyone involved in the *Lebo Beat*—writers, photographers, editors, contributors, and ad sales—lives right here in Mt. Lebanon. We care deeply about this place, and that personal connection shapes every story we tell.

Our goal is simple: to create a paper Mt. Lebanon can be proud of—and excited to read.

If you have story ideas, thoughts, or want to be part of The *Lebo Beat* team in any way, please reach out to us at info@lebobeat.com. We'd love to hear from you.

Community journalism is the heartbeat of a vibrant town. The *Lebo Beat* exists to keep us connected—to help residents, former neighbors, and newcomers alike stay in touch with the people and stories that define Mt. Lebanon.

You will find the *Lebo Beat* in your mailbox, distributed around town, and online at lebobeat.com.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read the *Lebo Beat*. When this paper was just an idea, the hope was simple—to create

something that feels like Mt. Lebanon: connected, genuine, and proud of where we live. Seeing that idea come to life through the support of neighbors (and businesses) like you has been humbling and inspiring.

Local journalism matters because it connects us—to each other, to our schools, to our small businesses, and to the stories that make this town so special. The *Lebo Beat* exists for that very reason.

As a small thank-you, we're offering a special subscription: 18 months for the price of 12, plus a complimentary *Lebo Beat* T-shirt. You'll find all the details on page 16.

My goal is simple—to keep growing the *Lebo Beat* into something Mt. Lebanon can be proud of: bigger, better, and more frequent. With your continued support, we'll make that happen together.

Thank you again for believing in local storytelling and for being part of this community we all love.

Here's to telling Mt. Lebanon's story—together. ♥

BEAT STREET



With Thanksgiving quickly approaching, we asked residents what they are thankful for this year.

"Our family health and my grandchildren."

– Doug S. Allenberry Circle



"My family. I'm blessed that all of my five grandchildren live here in Pittsburgh."

– Carolyn C., Cedar Blvd.

"My health and my family. My wife is a fantastic cook so turkey dinner is always a special treat."

– Mark G., Valley Park Drive



"So thankful for the opportunity to help raise my three grandkids."

– Vanessa G., Lemoyne

"Cooking for my parents and family. Food, wine, and family time is always the best recipe."

– Connie D., Struceton Ave.

About our interviewers: Mr. and Mrs. C have been Mt. Lebanon residents since 1967.

School Board *Continued from page 1*

She was encouraged that "the district ended fiscal year 2024–25 with a surplus after starting the year in a projected deficit due to underfunding in the state budget."

Though the budget crisis has improved through the hard work of the current board and Superintendent Friez, Campanaro said, "Restoring the district's financial health is crucial to ensuring that Mt. Lebanon can continue providing a top-tier education for all students. It will be vital for the board to collaborate closely with Dr. Friez to carefully review expenditures and budget wisely, balancing the need to sustain and enhance the district's tradition of academic excellence with the responsibility of managing the financial resources entrusted to the district by the community."

In 2005, Director-elect Clougherty and his wife

made the decision to move to her hometown of Mt. Lebanon. The quality of the schools was a big influence on that decision. They have raised their daughters (classes of 2026 and 2027) here, and he says that he has no doubt it was the right decision for their family.

Clougherty's main reasons for running include: 1) financial oversight of the district's spending, 2) promoting safe and effective use of technology by students, and 3) fostering an inclusive school culture where students of all backgrounds feel welcome and supported.

Clougherty's professional and volunteer background includes extensive experience in budget management, which he hopes will be a great asset to the district. He says, "Board oversight involves evaluating how actual expenditures compare to projected budgets and asking the

right questions to ensure that any necessary adjustments are made in a timely and efficient manner."

Director-elect Givens and her husband moved to Mt. Lebanon in 2019 with their two kids (now ages 12 and 9) and added a set of twins four years ago. She says her older two children are what she calls "neuro-spicy" — one has Down syndrome and one has ADHD. Those diagnoses have given her firsthand experience with IEPs and 504 plans in the district. She is excited to bring representation of younger kids onto the board.

Professionally, Givens works part time as a refugee youth program specialist. When asked what her main reason for running was, she answered, "I believe in supporting all kids, families and team members in our district, and I am especially concerned with protecting and supporting

those whose needs are overlooked or threatened. Specifically, I want to ensure protections and safeguards for LGBTQ+ students, parents and staff; individuals with disabilities and differences that require additional support; and newcomer students and families, especially those for whom language access is a barrier."

She thinks the most pressing issue facing the district is continuing the progress through responsible resource management that the current board, superintendent

and administration have done to successfully take the district from a funding deficit to a budget surplus over the past year.

Admittedly, the Mt. Lebanon School District has faced some challenges in recent years, but this group of school directors seems dialed in to the issues and what needs to continue to happen to allow the district to meet the needs of students while being good stewards of taxpayer dollars. They will be sworn in at the Dec. 8 school board meeting. ♥

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MARY KAY



Courts, Council, and Local Seats Decided in 2025 Election

Two Mt. Lebanon residents win judgeships as voters retain three Pa. Supreme Court justices *By Stacey Reibach*

Even though Mt. Lebanon residents couldn't vote for the Pittsburgh mayoral race, there were still many important races at stake. Allegheny County saw a very high 45% turnout rate – impressive for an off-year election.

On the ballot locally, Mt. Lebanon had four uncontested school board candidates – Becki Campanaro, Joy Givens, Melinda Berdyk and Tim Clougherty. Wards 2 and 4 also had Mt. Lebanon Commissioner races with Margaret Izzo

winning for Ward 2 and Nick Petti winning in Ward 4. Incumbent Treasurer Joe Senko was re-elected to his position, as was Allegheny County Sheriff Kevin Krause.

Labor Party candidate Alex Rose won the County Council At-Large race to complete the term that Republican Sam DeMarco vacated earlier this year when he resigned to work for Senator Dave McCormick.

Eight seats were up for grabs in the Allegheny County Court of Common

Pleas race. Two Mt. Lebanon residents – State Rep. Dan Miller and Anthony DeLuca – were successful in their bid to win a seat on that court.

(Rep. Miller will resign from the House in the coming months, which will generate a special election to fill the balance of his term which ends December 31, 2026. We'll cover that process in a future article.) The other six candidates who won their Court of Common Pleas race are Amanda Green-Hawkins, Quita Bridges,

Julie Capone, Heather Schmidt-Bresnahan, Jaime Hickton, and Matt Rudzki.

Brandon Neuman won an open seat for Judge of the Superior Court and Stella Tsai won an open seat for Judge of the Commonwealth Court.

The back page of this year's lengthy ballot had the judicial retention vote questions which drew many voters to the polls. Traditionally, retention votes are almost a sure thing with judges rarely losing their seat. This year, there was a push

by conservative groups to unseat the three Democratic Supreme Court justices, a story which garnered national attention. Millions of dollars were spent by both sides educating the public about what was at stake. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court is often at the forefront of many important decisions and might eventually see cases related to election laws and redistricting in the state. At stake was whether the PA Supreme Court would maintain its 5-2 Democratic majority or fall to a 2-2 partisan

deadlock for two years had the retention ballot measure's "no" vote been successful. Voters chose to retain the three Justices – Donohue, Dougherty and Wecht – for another ten-year term.

Also winning retention for another ten-year term (though far less controversial) were Superior Court Judge Dubow and Commonwealth Court Judge Wojcik, as well as Court of Common Pleas Judges Borkowski, Hertzberg, Lazzara, McGrady, McGough, Regan and Woodruff. ♥

Meet Ward 2 Commissioner-Elect Margaret Izzo

Longtime Mt. Lebanon resident plans to focus on safety, green spaces and fiscal responsibility *By Stacey Reibach*

Commissioner-elect Margaret Izzo has been a Mt. Lebanon resident for 25 years. She raised her two children here—they are graduates of Markham, Mellon and Mt. Lebanon High School. Izzo grew up in Springfield, Illinois, and attended the University of Illinois. She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania School of Law and practiced commercial litigation before dedicating her time to

community service and pro bono legal work.

Asked what issues her constituents raised during her door-to-door campaigning, Izzo said many residents voiced concerns about pedestrian and vehicular safety in the walking community. One of her stated priorities is "working with constituents to build more sidewalks and incorporate more traffic-calming measures."

Izzo shared that "resi-

dents also indicated that they would like better maintenance of our green spaces, and I would like to focus on working to protect and enhance our parks and recreational facilities while ensuring fiscal responsibility and safeguarding taxpayer resources." She also wants to maintain safe, vibrant residential neighborhoods and thriving business districts.

Commissioner-elect Izzo is not new to giving back

to the community. She has served on the Mt. Lebanon Civic Engagement Board for the past five years, as well as serving as a community mediator, helping Mt. Lebanon neighbors resolve issues. She is currently on the board of the Mt. Lebanon Community Foundation and was previously on the board of Outreach Teen and Family Services.

Izzo honors her late husband, Todd, who passed away in 2019, by giving



(Photo provided)

back to the community that supported her family during their difficult time. These acts of service and her community involvement influenced her decision to run for Ward 2 commissioner.

Commissioner-elect Izzo will be sworn in on Tuesday, Jan. 6. ♥

Meet Ward 4 Commissioner-elect Nick Petti

Public service, safe streets and green spaces top agenda for Mt. Lebanon's newest commissioner *By Stacey Reibach*

Commissioner-elect Nick Petti and his wife, Bridget, moved to Mt. Lebanon 24 years ago. Petti holds a master's degree in social work from Boston University and has worked for more than 20 years as a licensed social worker with a primary focus on geriatrics and hospice

care. They are the parents of two children and Stella, their therapy dog, who you might find volunteering with Petti at "Tail Waggin' Tutors" at the Mt. Lebanon Library.

Commissioner-elect Petti shared that his entire career has been focused on service to others, so

running for office was a natural extension of that calling. He said he feels strongly about giving back to his community. He knocked on an impressive 421 doors while campaigning and found that, in general, residents love living in Mt. Lebanon.

Commissioner-elect Petti shared three of his priorities:

- **Parks and recreation spaces:** Preserving parks, improving recreational spaces and supporting recreational activities through conservation and community-driven efforts.



(Photo provided)

- **Achieving and maintaining walkable communities:** Improving pedestrian access throughout Mt. Lebanon and creating safer pathways that promote a healthier, more connected community.

- **Public safety partnership:** Petti said he will champion public safety partnerships connecting residents to essential social services, fostering a safe community where everyone can thrive.

Commissioner-elect Petti will be sworn in on Jan. 6, 2026. ♥





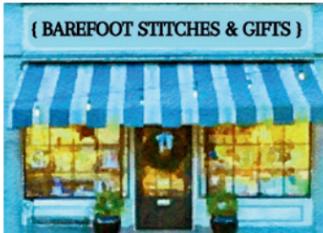
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Love Beat

The Wedding of Maggie Rimmel and Andrew Galant!



Maggie Rimmel, daughter of James W. and Erin Rimmel of Mt. Lebanon, and Andrew Galant, son of Geoff and Susan Galant of Jacksonville, Florida, were married on Saturday, Sept. 6, 2025, at the Longue Vue Club. Maggie and Andrew met in college—she attended Emory University, and he attended Georgia Tech. The weekend began with a lively welcome party on Friday night at Cinderlands, where guests enjoyed dinner, drinks, speeches, and mingling. Despite a forecast of rain, the wedding day turned out perfectly clear. Mt. Lebanon locals Lucy Rimmel and Riley Napoleon stood beside Maggie as bridesmaids. Maggie wore a beaded Rita Vinieris gown from Bridal Beginning. The couple worked with several talented local vendors, including Exhale Events, greenSinner, 1978 Collection, Cakes by Colby, DJ Digital Dave, Beauty Justified by Justine, Bianca Tang Photography, and Dorosh Documentaries. Following the celebration, Maggie and Andrew departed for their honeymoon in the Whitsundays and Sydney, Australia.

If you have a “love story” to share (engagement, wedding, or anniversary) send information and photos to the Lebo Beat at lebobeat.com.

News Briefs

Mt. Lebanon School Board Receives Clean Audit, Adds to Fund Balance

The Mt. Lebanon School District Board of Directors met Monday, Oct. 13, where auditors presented a clean review of the district's finances.

Hosack, Specht, Muetzel & Wood LLP issued an unmodified opinion on the district's 2024–25 financial statements, indicating full compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles and Auditing Standards.

For the first time in six years, the district added to its fund balance, including \$2.8 million from a year-end surplus and \$3 million from a settlement with Concordia Lutheran Ministries. The unassigned fund balance now stands at roughly \$7.5 million, or 5.99 percent of total expenditures — meeting board policy targets and moving closer to the state-recommended 8 percent.

Minutes and information about upcoming meetings are available on the Mt. Lebanon School District BoardDocs website.

Mt. Lebanon Public Library Named Pennsylvania's 2025 Library of the Year

The Mt. Lebanon Public Library has been named the 2025 Library of the Year by the Pennsylvania Library Association (PaLA), earning the state's highest honor for its leadership, service and unwavering commitment to free access to information.

PaLA recognized the library not only for its professional excellence, but also for its stand in defense of intellectual freedom. In February, Mt. Lebanon became the first library in Pennsylvania to declare itself a Book Sanctuary, a designation affirming that challenged or banned materials will remain accessible to all patrons.

The award also highlights the library's strong community engagement. More than half of Mt. Lebanon's 34,000 residents — about 56 percent — hold active library cards. In 2024, the library circulated more than 764,000 physical and digital items, welcomed over 35,000 attendees to nearly 1,500 programs, and answered more than 23,000 reference questions.

With this honor, Mt. Lebanon becomes the first library in Allegheny County to receive PaLA's top award, underscoring its role as a regional leader in public service and inclusive access to information. ♥

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What makes Mt. Lebanon so special? *Continued from page 1*

is directly impacting lives for the better. A 40-year Mt. Lebanon resident, he and Lynn have five children, five grandchildren (with one on the way) and a dog named Franklin.

Margaret Hooton moved to Mt. Lebanon in 1980 with her husband, Mike, after the couple relocated from the Midwest for his career. They raised four children here, all of whom attended St. Paul's Episcopal Preschool.

With a love of children and a passion for music, Margaret volunteered at St. Paul's with a child on one hip and an acoustic guitar on the other. What began as volunteering quickly be-

came her life's calling.

She went on to spend 44 years as an early childhood music instructor at St. Paul's, later teaching at Duquesne University, where she helped integrate arts into early childhood education. Margaret also served as a teaching artist with the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, visiting public school classrooms throughout the city.

Today, she performs locally — including at the Mt. Lebanon Public Library — shares her music online and serves on the board of Giving 2Grow, a nonprofit helping to feed local children. Still, she'll tell you her greatest joy is her family —

especially her 2-year-old grandson, Michael, who loves listening to his "Gummy" sing.

Travis Simpson-Hunt and his family love to travel, learn new things and host others in their home. So when he learned that the Mt. Lebanon Exchange Student Program needed host families, he volunteered immediately.

In August 2021, the Simpson-Hunts welcomed Nandor "Nandy" Szuecs from Hungary for a year that turned into an unforgettable adventure. Between classes, they explored Mt. Lebanon, Pittsburgh, the Laurel Highlands, Cleveland, Lake Erie, Niagara Falls and Toronto. Nandy swam in the Atlantic, toured Washington, D.C., climbed the Statue of Liberty and strolled Hollywood Boulevard.

They hiked the Blue Ridge Mountains, went spelunking in the Shenandoah Valley, skied in the Finger Lakes, ice fished in Canada and soaked up the sun in Turks and Caicos and the Dominican Republic.

In one year, Travis helped Nandy experience more than many Americans do in a lifetime. And in August 2025, the family opened their home again — this time to Mads, a 16-year-old from Denmark living with them through the new year. Hope Mads packed some comfortable shoes!

Xiaolin Zhang was born and raised in Wuhan, China, where economic conditions were difficult. Determined to succeed, she earned both undergraduate and graduate degrees in computer engineering before moving to the United States at age 30 to attend the University of Pittsburgh.

After earning a second master's degree in computer science, Xiaolin built a career in software development. She and her husband, Dave, eventually settled in Mt. Lebanon, where they raised two children — and even kept chickens.

Outside of work, Xiaolin devoted herself to helping others. She volunteered as a translator for doctor visits and community meetings and developed a new methodology for teaching conversational Chinese using technology and apps to accelerate language learning.

Her intelligence and work ethic are clear to anyone who knows her, but it's



Margaret Hooton with her grandson, Michael. (Photo provided)



From left, Travis Simpson-Hunt, Michael Simpson-Hunt, Nandor Szuecs, Parker Simpson-Hunt and Stephen Simpson-Hunt. (Photo provided)



Xiaolin Zang with Rikki. (Photo provided)

her smile and kindness that light up the neighborhood — where she and Dave were often seen walking their late, beloved collie mix, Rikki.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

These four residents share a few things in common: they love Mt. Lebanon, they use their time and talents to help others, and they all live on Jefferson Drive.

Whether they're changing lives in Uganda or bringing smiles to local classrooms, Mt. Lebanon's people are giving back in meaningful ways.

It's the Lebo way — a place where neighbors still borrow cups of sugar, where bleachers are filled with as many grandparents as parents, and where police officers stop at lemonade stands.

There's so much to love about Mt. Lebanon. But above all, it's a place where everyone is welcome — where neighbors help neighbors, and where we recognize and celebrate each other's accomplishments.

Just imagine what amazing things our other 33,996 residents are doing.

Welcome to the *Lebo Beat*. ♥



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Mt. Lebanon Dining Scene Expands

Toastique brings gourmet toast and smoothies to Uptown Mt. Lebanon

Couple transforms long-vacant Washington Road storefront into a fresh, health-focused café By Rick Shrum

Brad and Chrissy Sileo have re-entered the restaurant business — this time, for the health of it.

Brad previously owned a software company and Chrissy worked as a preschool teacher, but when an opportunity arose in uptown Mt. Lebanon, the couple seized it. With prior restaurant experience and a shared interest in health-focused dining, they purchased a long-vacant building at 700 Washington Road and converted it into Toastique, a gourmet toast and juice bar franchise.

Following an extensive renovation, the shop opened June 7, offering toast creations, smoothies, cold-pressed juices, smoothie bowls, iced collagen lattes, oat dishes, soups and more.

"Everything is made from scratch," Brad said. Toastique is open 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The location also features catering, a kids menu and a fall menu that will carry into winter.

The Sileos, longtime Upper St. Clair residents, say launching a franchise in the South Hills has been rewarding. "Things have been pretty

amazing. We're so happy here," Brad said. "We've been very busy. Revenue is good, and people have shown a lot of enthusiasm."

As the name suggests, toast is a signature menu item — and all offerings can be prepared gluten free. "We have a separate toaster for all of our gluten-free toasts," Brad said. "If you want to be a fresh restaurant, you have to accommodate the needs of all customers."

Toastique employs about 15 people, including full-time and part-time workers and high school students. The space features bright interior lighting, a clearly displayed menu and updated exterior signage.

Although this is the couple's first restaurant as owners, both worked in the food industry earlier in their careers. They began exploring business opportunities more than two years ago, considering sites in Upper St. Clair and Mt. Lebanon before selecting the former Isaly's deli space, which later housed a doctor's office and sat vacant for years.

"This place was vacant for a long time," Brad said. "We put in a ton of

work to develop it. The building had lots of issues. We redid the electricity and plumbing and made a lot of investments to make it what we wanted it to be."

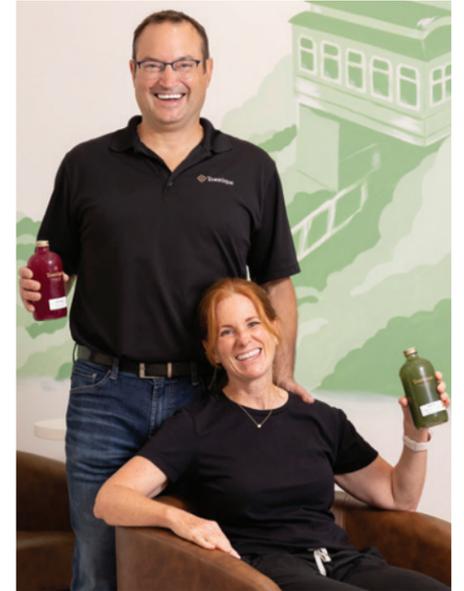
The Sileos have lived in Upper St. Clair for 25 years and are parents of two adult sons. Brad grew up in the Reading area, and Chrissy is originally from Pittsburgh's Greenfield neighborhood. In 2018, Brad sold the software business he owned for 12 years. Chrissy was a preschool teacher at Mushroom Family Learning Center on the Mt. Lebanon-Scott Township line.

Toastique is the first Pittsburgh-area location for the franchise, and Brad said the company is considering expansion into Downtown and the North Hills. The couple is also focused on building community involvement.

"We're looking for local causes to support," Brad said.

And how are customers responding?

"Some people who come in for the first time might be a little skeptical," Brad said. "Then they eat, say they're full, and it was delicious." ♥



Toastique owners Brad and Chrissy Sileo. (Photo provided)



Smoothies are among the many healthy and delicious options offered at Toastique. (Photo provided)

F&F Pizzeria opens first location outside NYC on Beverly Road

Popular New York slice shop replaces longtime Bado's site By Rick Shrum

The new restaurant at 307 Beverly Road is no pie-in-the-sky endeavor. F&F Pizzeria is open and serving customers in Beverly Road's vibrant business district.

The Brooklyn-based business made its Mt. Lebanon debut in late October, offering a menu with a decidedly Italian flavor, including a variety of pizzas, pastas and shareable plates. Gluten-free items are available, but they do not include pizza — at least for now.

This is the first F&F location outside New York City, and the company is considering a second Pittsburgh-area restaurant.

The site has deep local roots. F&F Pizzeria moved into the building where Bado's Pizza Grill and Ale House served diners for nearly 40 years. The Badolato family, of Mt. Lebanon, closed that restaurant in November 2023, but

remains in the food business with a food truck and catering operation.

The new restaurant's name comes from its founders, Frank Castronovo and Frank Falcinelli, who launched the business 21 years ago in Brooklyn. Known locally as "the Franks," they share ownership with partners Robert Mullin and Anthony Simasek.

Renowned for its New York and Neapolitan-style pies, F&F built a strong reputation in Brooklyn. The New York Times once rated it "one of the best slice shops in the city."

F&F is off to a promising start in Mt. Lebanon, said marketing director Ashley Bode, who traveled from New York for the opening.

"Everyone here has been welcoming and very excited," Bode said. "People seem to like it."

Members of the Badolato

family stopped in on the third day of business, she said.

The owners oversaw renovations to brighten and modernize the longtime dining location, installing new flooring and lighting. Parking is available along Beverly Road and in a spacious lot behind the building.

As of Nov. 7, the pizzeria was open every day except Tuesday. The hours at that time were:

- Monday: 5–9 p.m.
- Wednesday–Thursday: 5–10 p.m.
- Friday: 5–11 p.m.
- Saturday: noon–10 p.m.
- Sunday: noon–9 p.m.

Customers place orders at the counter and Bode said the business plans to eventually offer private dining for group events.

F&F has aspirations in Mt. Lebanon and throughout the Pittsburgh region. ♥



From left, Frank Falcinelli and Frank Castronovo, also known as "the two Franks." (Photo by Rose Colored Creative)



F&F's menu includes a variety of pizzas, pastas and shareable plates. (Photo by Rose Colored Creative)



Scout Troop 284 presents the colors and leads the Pledge of Allegiance at the Mt. Lebanon Veterans Day ceremony. (Photo by Lebo Beat)



The Mt. Lebanon Veterans Memorial. (Photo by Lebo Beat)



Navy SEAL and Mt. Lebanon firefighter Brian Loughridge delivers the keynote address. (Photo by Lebo Beat)

Veterans honored with community ceremony

Residents, first responders and local leaders gather to pay tribute to those who served

By Brion Palmer

More than 150 residents, veterans and community leaders gathered Nov. 11 at the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center for the township's

annual Veterans Day ceremony, a tribute to those who served and a reminder of the sacrifices behind the nation's freedoms.

Pastor Doug Heagy of Mt. Lebanon United Lutheran Church delivered the invocation and benediction. The ceremony

opened with remarks from Commission President Craig Grella, who said attending the event is "one of my biggest honors and

privileges." He urged the crowd to carry the day's message beyond the ceremony.

"We can't forget veterans fought for the very freedoms

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Pastor Doug Heagy of Mt. Lebanon United Lutheran Church leads the invocation and benediction. (Photo by Lebo Beat)



Fire Engine 3 outside the Mt. Lebanon Recreation Center. (Photo by Lebo Beat)



Members of the Mt. Lebanon Police Department attend the ceremony honoring veterans. (Photo by Lebo Beat)



The Mt. Lebanon High School Triple Trio leads the singing of the national anthem and "God Bless America." (Photo by Lebo Beat)

we have today—to assemble in public, speak our minds and pursue our dreams," Grella said.

Scout Troop 284 presented the colors and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The keynote address was delivered by Navy SEAL veteran and Mt. Lebanon Firefighter Brian Loughridge. He reflected on moving to Mt. Lebanon with his wife 15 years ago, noting that "a community like Mt. Lebanon doesn't just come from nowhere."

Loughridge expressed concern over declining military participation, noting that about 20 percent of American adults were veterans in the 1980s compared with fewer than 6 percent today.

"People think the military is boot camp—who wants to be screamed at face-to-face for four years? But that's wrong," he said. "Boot camp is testing and training. Afterward, you're given tremendous responsibility, you get to travel the world and you receive

unlimited training. It's an incredible experience."

He credited the military for shaping his career and character. "The discipline, the integrity, the respect for others—and the diversity you encounter—are things the world needs now more than ever."

Loughridge also spoke about the complex emotions Veterans Day can bring. He shared the story of a coworker who calls it the "worst day of the year" after losing his best

friend—who enlisted with him through the buddy system—to an IED in Iraq.

"Veterans Day means different things to different people," Loughridge said. "I have some friends that go out and do a guy's weekend, party, have fun. I also know people that sit in the basement, close the door, and don't want anyone near them. Veterans don't separate Memorial Day and Veterans Day—they're one and the same."

He concluded with a message familiar to many

who have served: "If not me, then who?"

"My challenge to everyone here is to incorporate that saying into your own life—whether it's a small chore, a random act of kindness or something bigger. You might be surprised by what it does. We call that the veteran way."

The Mt. Lebanon High School Triple Trio performed the national anthem and later "God Bless America," bringing the ceremony to a moving close. ♥



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LEBO BEAT SPORTS

A Strong Start for Coach Perry

Three Ivy League commitments highlight a strong year for Blue Devils under new leadership By Scarlett Sweeney

Since 1990, Greg Perry has been a familiar face in the WPIAL. After spending 28 years combined at Seton LaSalle and Keystone Oaks, Perry was named head football coach at Mt. Lebanon High School in 2024. Although Mt. Lebanon finished 2-5 in conference play, Perry is optimistic about the future of Mt. Lebanon football.

Perry is sending four seniors to Division I programs this year, three of them to the Ivy League. Grayson Beck is attending Princeton University, Joe Malone is attending Cornell University, Patrick Smith is attending the University of Pennsylvania and Jackson Kramer is attending Villanova University.

For those trying to be recruited, Perry notes that at the end of a player's

junior year, college coaches visit the school and ask about potential prospects. The first part of recruitment is academic — looking at GPA, grades and SAT scores. Then, players are evaluated physically as coaches work them out on the Lebo field to see if they can compete at the next level.

"I've been in this a long time, so most coaches will trust my judgment," Perry said. "Over the years, if you sell someone a bad bag of goods, they're not going to come back. You have to be honest and straightforward with them about what kind of teammates these kids are, what kind of social life they have, and how they get along in school with other kids."

Once a player starts getting offers, Perry asks them two questions when choosing a school. The first, he says, is how far away they want to go from home.

"Do you want your parents to be able to come to your games and drive home, or are they going to have to fly and spend the night?" Perry said. "Secondly, and more importantly, are you going to be fine being four hours from home? Two hours from home?"

Perry has learned over the years that many players think they want to go far away but realize later they don't. He encourages prospects to spend a weekend on campus to see if it's a good fit.

As a coach, Perry points out that recruiting has two sides and is not always



Four Division I signees — including three Ivy Leaguers — mark a positive first year in Blue Devils football

fair, especially for 17- and 18-year-olds.

"There are two sides of it," Perry said. "I want to be recruited, but I'm not getting recruited, so you get frustrated. The other part of

it is, I have 10 offers—how do I tell nine guys no? It's a process that we're putting 17- and 18-year-old boys through, and a lot of times, it isn't a fair process."

Continued on page 13

Four Mt. Lebanon Seniors Commit to Division I Football

Blue Devils athletes credit hard work, support and team culture for reaching the next level.

By Scarlett Sweeney

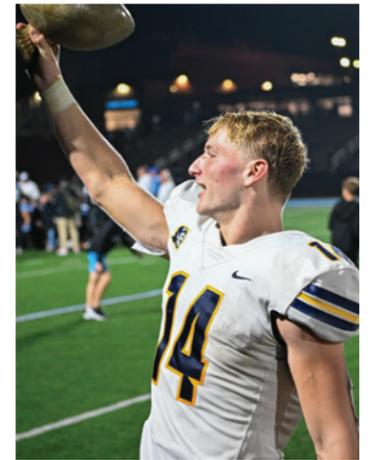
While Mt. Lebanon's football season didn't finish the way the team had hoped, the future is bright for four seniors heading to the collegiate level to play Division I football. For Grayson Beck, Joe Malone, Patrick Smith and Jackson Kramer, the opportunity wouldn't have been possible without their experience in Lebo football.

Senior quarterback and captain Patrick Smith will attend the University of Pennsylvania next fall. Leading the team both on and off the field his senior year has been an experience he says he will cherish for years to come.

"It means everything to me," Smith said. "I love the team so much, and having their back and them having mine is a very special feeling that I'm blessed to experience."

Throughout his years in the program, Smith said the most important lesson he learned was that success requires giving 100 percent effort all the time.

"Whether you are the best or not, going as hard



Jackson Kramer, Joe Malone, Grayson Beck, Patrick Smith - all photos by Zachary Smith.

as you can affects both the players on your team and your own performance," he said. "This completely shaped the way I worked because I used to think I had to be the best, but if you go as hard as you can, you'll end up being great."

Senior captain and defensive end Joe Malone is committed to Cornell University, where he plans to enroll next fall. He agrees with Smith that giving your best effort is crucial to playing at the next level.

"Whatever you think you're doing right now, you

can always do more and learn more," Malone said. "If you really want to get to that D1 level, there are sacrifices you'll have to make that most people don't even realize. You must be mentally strong and not let outside noise distract you from your goal. Always have that competitive mindset because someone out there is working just as hard, trying to take what you want."

Malone credits his team-first mindset for allowing him to succeed. He plans to bring the same mentality to the next level — one that he

said has grown and developed throughout his years at Mt. Lebanon.

Senior linebacker Grayson Beck plans to attend Princeton University next fall. After a standout junior season that earned him all-section first-team honors, Beck tore his ACL in the offseason, sidelining him for his senior year. The setback gave him a new perspective while supporting his teammates from the sideline.

"My mindset never really changed, whether I was on the field or the sideline," Beck said. "The goals were

always the same — to help the team get better and win every Friday night. I think from my injury, I learned most how to lead from the sideline and still have a voice on the team, no matter if I couldn't play."

Beck said the injury also taught him to be grateful for every opportunity. To younger players, he urged them to take advantage of every moment.

"I tell all the players below to really enjoy the time you have and play every play like it's your last," Beck said. "I

Continued on page 15



Pryor sisters leave their mark on Mt. Lebanon girls soccer

Senior Lucy wraps up her career as freshman Scarlett begins hers in a quarterfinal season to remember By Scarlett Sweeney

This fall, Mt. Lebanon's girls soccer team had an outstanding season, finishing 7-4 in section play and advancing to the quarterfinals of the WPIAL playoffs. While it may have seemed like any other season to most, for two sisters — senior Lucy Pryor and freshman Scarlett Pryor — it was one they will remember for a lifetime.

Senior captain Lucy Pryor, a four-year varsity player, earned first-team all-section and Big 56 honors her senior year, following a second-team all-section selection as a junior. While her on-field contributions have long stood out, this season was especially meaningful to her.

"This season has meant more to me than any other season I've played, partly because my sister was playing right by my side, but also because it was my last season of my soccer career," Pryor said.

Since freshman year, Pryor said she has worked on changing her mindset, which she credits for helping her grow into a more well-rounded player.

"I have become more confident in my skills, but I have also learned to keep going no matter what,"

Pryor said. "If we are losing or winning, playing the first-ranked team in the section or the worst-ranked team, I will always play my hardest and leave everything on the field. Part of this stems from the fact that those games were my last few games of my life, but also because I wanted to work hard and fight for my team."

Pryor credits her sister, Scarlett, for being her biggest inspiration and supporter throughout the season. Scarlett, an outstanding player herself, earned all-section honors, Big 56 second-team recognition, and a starting position as just a freshman. She, in turn, credits her sister as her biggest mentor — not only in soccer, but in life.

"Although she didn't teach me this, when the season ended, I realized how fast things can happen and to make the most of every moment because you never know when it could all end," Scarlett Pryor said.

To younger players like her sister, Lucy Pryor offers a piece of advice: play for something bigger than yourself.

"Play for a purpose greater than yourself," Pryor said. "You have to learn how to

become selfless when you are part of a team as special as Mt. Lebanon girls soccer."

Lucy Pryor believes she is who she is today because of the Mt. Lebanon girls soccer program and her head coach, Seth Young.

"I am proud to be part of a team that was able to shape me into the person I am today," Pryor said. "Coach Seth played a large part in this. I am just really glad to have had him as my coach because he led me to become the player I am today."

Seth Young, a Mt. Lebanon graduate who went on to play collegiate soccer at Allegheny College, has been the head coach of the girls soccer team since 2019. Both Pryor sisters note that Young prioritizes team bonding. The team has weekly Sunday night dinners, and before every season, they gather at Denny's at 3 a.m. before sleeping on the turf.

"We are all so close," Lucy Pryor said. "It truly feels like a family to me, and these traditions we have are what make our bond so special."

Scarlett Pryor credits her sister for helping make the underclassmen and upperclassmen connection a meaningful one.

"It was nice to know she



Freshman Scarlett Pryor and senior captain and sister Lucy Pryor celebrate with teammates after a Blue Devils goal. (Photo by Marilee Kline)

always has my back," Pryor said. "She helped not only me to be close with the whole team, but also everyone. She taught me to just enjoy the whole experience."

Scarlett Pryor also attributes her successful transition to high school soccer to the leadership of the older players.

"The older players prepared me for what practice and games would be like," Pryor said. "It was very fun to be exposed to high-level players to help me develop as a player myself."

Scarlett Pryor's goal for the

future is simple: she wants to win a WPIAL championship.

As Lucy Pryor concludes her soccer career and moves on to the next chapter of her life, she plans to carry with her the lessons she learned from Mt. Lebanon girls soccer.

"Soccer has taught me that when things aren't going your way or aren't presenting themselves in the manner that you expected, don't stop working toward your goals or initiatives," Pryor said. "I am so grateful I got to play alongside my sister, and I will truly miss it so much." ♥

Blue Devils reload by committee after historic hockey season

Mt. Lebanon aims for a sixth straight playoff run despite graduating key scorers and goaltenders By Pete Eberhart

The 2024-25 regular season saw the Mt. Lebanon High School varsity hockey team reach heights not seen in 17 years. While the Blue Devils couldn't maintain momentum down the stretch after clinching their fifth consecutive berth in the PIHL Class AAA playoffs, they look to rebuild during the 2025-26 season.

If Mt. Lebanon is going to return to the postseason for a sixth year in a row, the team will have to overcome several key losses up front and in net. Last season's group had its first top-two finish in the league since 2008, its highest winning percentage since 2008, and its most regular-season wins (14) since 2012—courtesy of an offense that was second in the league in goals scored and a defense that was second in goals against.

The Blue Devils will look to a large senior class to collectively replace the loss of almost two-thirds of their total goals scored (44 of 69). They'll also need to fill the void left by two goaltenders who combined for a 2.12 goals-against average and a .920 save percentage.

Mt. Lebanon will lean heavily on two-time all-star and junior captain Xavier Bias, whose 15 goals last year were second on the team and account for 67 percent of the returning total this season. Senior forward Ben Kurta was second among returning goal scorers with five.

A veteran defensive corps is led by senior alternate captains Nathan Tran and Sam Eberhart, along with classmate Pierce Conrardy. Seniors Parker Arlet and Zach Lynam were also key players on the back

end last year. This year, the coaching staff plans to use both heavily at forward and defense, hoping their puck skills and offensive instincts can help drive extra offense. Juniors Billy Varholla, Keller Dungan and Cooper Church are expected to see time on the blue line as well.

In addition to Bias and Kurta, senior forwards Graham Resler—who missed almost all his junior season due to injury—Liam Powers, Josh Lehman and Kyle Quigley return, hoping to produce in larger roles, along with junior Cam Mayer, who led the team with two goals in its first three games.

Senior Charlie Bank has performed solidly in a well-defined role early in his first varsity season, and sophomores Sean Hough and Will White have also shown the potential to be



Two-time all-star and junior captain Xavier Bias is expected to lead the offense in the 2025-26 season. (Photo provided)

key contributors this season. The Blue Devils will also look to sophomore Ford Schmitt for a spark when he returns to the ice after football season.

Junior Sam Shinn and senior August Zentner are set to compete for time between the pipes. Seniors Cooper Whalen and Luke Sullivan, along with sopho-

mores Tucker Klasnick and Beau Conaway, round out the roster and will battle for spots in the lineup.

The Blue Devils play two games at the Mt. Lebanon Ice Center in December: Monday, Dec. 8, against Fox Chapel and Wednesday, Dec. 11, against Peters Township. Both games start at 8:30 p.m. ♥



Lebo Moms Set the Stage for New Competitive Hip-Hop Team

What started as one mother's question — "Where's our team?"—has sparked a movement uniting dancers, parents and the community. **By Jennifer Ganser**

What started as a mother-daughter outing a few years ago to watch a local high school hip-hop dance competition turned into much more for Kara Barton and her now 11-year-old daughter, Josephine, of Blue Spruce Circle.

Barton said she leaned over to another woman in the audience to ask where the team from Mt. Lebanon High School was, only to learn there wasn't one. The news came as a surprise to Barton, who later found out that many school districts in the South Hills — including Chartiers Valley, Upper St. Clair, Peters Township and Canon-McMillan — had competitive dance teams

"How do I start a team that doesn't involve my daughter? I have this interest, but is it shared? I went stale for a little while," Barton said.

Barton's wheels kept turning, and a few months later she was introduced to Julie Percelli of Valleyview Road. Percelli's daughter, Sophia, was a rising high school junior with a background in classical ballet who wanted to expand her dance education and find connection at school.

The pair met with Mt. Lebanon Athletic Director John Grogan last spring and quickly got to work securing the necessary insurance, seeking potential coaches, creating an executive board and more. The Mt. Lebanon Dance Team, or MLDT,

board is made up of President Kara Barton, Treasurer Julie Percelli and Secretary Rochelle Breier.

"The girls and parents have worked hard putting together the program, and it is great to be able to offer another opportunity for our students," Grogan said.

Auditions were held about a week after school started, and the so-called Game Day Squad is made up of 18 dancers, 12 of whom also make up the competition team.

Barton said that while the experience has been a baptism by fire, other sports programs in the district have been incredibly welcoming and encouraging. The girls performed for soccer and field hockey this fall and will take the court for a varsity basketball game on Dec. 16.

"It's really fun to be a part of a team. Now I have a whole new set of friends from it. I haven't performed in a while, so it's just getting back to it," Sophia Percelli said. I'm just really grateful that they started this so I could continue my passion for dance."

The MLDT competition team will participate in a virtual competition in December, with its first in-person competition scheduled for early January in Philadelphia.

"There will be a lot of feedback for the girls and for the coaches who are taking this on for the first time," Barton said.



Dance team coaches Anna Cannavo (left) and Sarah Langguth (right) have strong ties to the community. (Photo by Zachary Smith)

The two coaches, Anna Cannavo and Sarah Langguth, also have strong ties to Mt. Lebanon, making their roles with MLDT even more meaningful. Langguth, of Woodland Drive, has more than 20 years of dance experience, having danced on the college dance team at Slippery Rock University, where she minored in dance.

"One of the reasons my husband and I decided to buy a house in Mt. Lebanon is because of the strong school district and how woven it is within the community. Lebo Pride is unmatched, and being part of a community program where I can share my passion of dance

with students has been immensely rewarding," coach Langguth said.

As for Cannavo, she started dancing at age 3, has experience with competitive dance and went on to study dance and elementary education at Point Park University. She recently worked as a long-term substitute in the Mt. Lebanon School District at Lincoln Elementary School.

"I could not have asked for more professional, experienced coaches — just in every way. It's been

wonderful," Barton said. While the coaches polish routines, the board continues to pursue sponsorships and fundraising opportunities and hopes to grow community support.

"I was able to see one of their performances this fall and they were really good. I'm looking forward to watching them build upon what they did this fall as we move into the winter season and I'm sure they will continue to do great things," Grogan said.

The team is preparing to host a youth dance clinic for grades 1-8 on Sunday, Nov. 23. This is one of many ways they plan to promote the team and raise awareness.

"Starting this team was really just a passion for my daughter, Josephine, and girls like her," Barton said. "It feels like everyone has something in this town, especially in high school. Other moms talk about the importance of having a 'thing' and how crucial that is to feel like they belong to something."

Barton hopes to ignite a spark in other young dancers in the district who may one day, like her daughter, find themselves on the hip-hop team. Even if her daughter chooses a different path, she said, it will all have been worth it. ♥



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Volleyball seniors leave legacy on and off the court

Seven Blue Devils close their final chapter together, celebrating friendship, growth and the love of the game By Scarlett Sweeney

From freshman jitters to senior send-offs, seven Mt. Lebanon girls' volleyball seniors have been through it all together. For players who've spent years diving across the court, celebrating victories and growing together, the 2025 season marked more than just the end of a schedule—it marked the end of a chapter.

Senior libero and captain Keira Palmer has been a backbone of the team since her freshman year as a four-year varsity player. To Palmer, this season was not about wins or losses; it was about the memories she created and the person she became.

"This season was my last year playing school volleyball and the end of my nine-year volleyball career," Palmer said. "Since it was my last time playing, I just wanted to have fun, always give my full effort, and make good memories to look back on."

Senior middle blocker Izzy Shane said the most important aspect of her senior season was playing her absolute best and leaving her mark on MTLVB. Shane is committed to play Division III volleyball at Waynesburg University, where she plans to double major in forensic investigation and criminal justice administration. She credits MTLVB for equipping her with the skills to play at the next level.

"I really just can't imagine not playing the sport I love," Shane said. "I love being in the gym and doing drills to better myself

and my teammates. I think MTLVB has equipped me for this because I didn't start really playing on varsity until this year. Last year, being benched truly helped me because I was able to get familiar with playing other positions, which is what my college coach was looking for."

Shane also credits her mindset for helping her grow throughout the years as both a player and a person.

"The biggest growth in my mindset has been my ability to stay positive, even when we're down," Shane said. "I used to really take it to heart and get down on myself, but now I focus on the next play, and that's really helped my mental game."

Palmer agrees that maintaining the right mindset is the biggest challenge in volleyball—something she has learned to strengthen over the years.

"Volleyball is a game of mistakes, and if you dwell on them, it's hard to win," Palmer said. "Have a short memory. Make an adjustment and move on, or it will affect the rest of your game."

Senior middle blocker Lucy McCord, a four-year varsity player, plans to continue her volleyball career in college while studying nursing. McCord credits the team's bond for making her senior season so special.

"This season has meant a lot because it was my last chance to leave everything



Varsity seniors for the 2025 volleyball team, from top left: Lucy McCord, Tessa Hoover, Maya Gelman and Isabella Shane; bottom left: Lillian Beasley, Colbi Wilson and Keira Palmer. (Photo by Zachary Smith)

on the court with my team," McCord said. "Volleyball and the team mean everything to me. They're like my second family, and I'm so happy that this sport has brought me my best friends."

Palmer said the team's dynamic helped define her senior season.

"The most meaningful moment in my career is my last game against USC," Palmer said. "Since I knew it was the last time I was playing, I gave all my effort. Even though we didn't win, it was so nice how the whole team was working together."

Before games, the team bonds through pregame huddles, hyping each other up to stay motivated and

alert. Shane said those huddles have been among her most meaningful moments.

"I think my most meaningful moment has been leading the huddles before every game," Shane said. "It helps me lock in and really focus on all aspects of the game and what to be prepared for."

McCord also believes the teamwork and communication she has learned on and off the volleyball court will translate to her everyday life for years to come. To younger players, she urges them to soak in every moment.

"My advice would be to always give 100%, no matter what you're doing," McCord said. "Never take

any moment for granted, because it all goes by so fast."

As the seniors close out their final season, they leave behind more than just stats on a scoreboard—they leave a culture of perseverance, positivity and unity. Their leadership has set the tone for younger players to follow, ensuring that Mt. Lebanon volleyball will continue to thrive for years to come.

"My advice would be to stay positive, even when it gets hard," Shane said. "Being able to focus on the fact that volleyball is a sport where you're meant to have fun really can put everything into perspective and help you have a great season with your teammates." ♥

Coach Perry *Continued from page 10*

Nowadays, with NIL money and the transfer portal, recruiting looks different. Perry noted that the Ivy League tends to be more lenient on grades now because many players go where the money is—something the Ivy League does not offer.

However, Perry emphasizes the importance of choosing a school based on academics, not just athletics.

"I would tell players to find the school that can put them in a better situation academically," Perry said. "Sooner or later, your helmet's going to come off. You could get an

injury, you can burn out, but you're always going to have that education. You need that diploma because you don't know what's going to happen."

Perry said the most rewarding part of the journey is seeing a player sign his offer and what it means for the family.

"Knowing your player is able to go play at the next level, hopefully get a scholarship, help their parents out and get an education is rewarding," Perry said. "We have the three boys going to an Ivy for a reason. They all could have gone to a public university, but they

wanted to achieve the best education they could."

Perry reflected not only on their athletic success but also on the type of young men they've become under his coaching.

"I feel honored that I've gotten to coach all four of these kids," Perry said. "I'm glad that I came to Mt. Lebanon to be with them. They're all good gentlemen, and whether they have a football helmet on or not, they're going to be successful in life. I think they're going to be good people and good family people down the road, which I'm proud of." ♥

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High School honors fall varsity letter winners

Student-athletes recognized for athletic achievement, academics, dedication, leadership, and school spirit.

By Brion Palmer

On Nov. 12, Mt. Lebanon High School celebrated its fall 2025 varsity letter winners, recognizing the hard work, dedication and achievements of its student-athletes both on the field and in the classroom.

This season, 206 athletes across four boys' teams and eight girls' teams earned varsity letters. Thirteen seniors — three boys and 10 girls — reached a rare milestone by earning their fourth varsity letter, marking years of consistent excellence. Another 103 students received their first varsity letters, underscoring the district's strong and growing pipeline of athletic talent.

Student-athletes are also recognized for their academic success through the Scholar-Athlete Awards and the Athletic Director's Team Award. Scholar-Athlete Award recipients are posted on the district website. Academic honors are recognized as follows:

- Mt. Lebanon Scholar-Athlete Award: 4.0 GPA
- Blue Devil Scholar-Athlete Award: 3.5–3.99 GPA
- Lebo Scholar-Athlete Award: 3.0–3.49 GPA

Fall sports GPAs are based on the first nine-week grading period. The academic honors achieved by the student-athletes are next to their names below.

The Athletic Director's Team Award, presented to the team with the highest cumulative GPA, went to the girls tennis team for the third consecutive year. The team posted an impressive 3.77 GPA.

The evening concluded with the presentation of the Honor the Game Award, given to student-athletes who exemplify the highest standards of sportsmanship. The award reflects the ROOTS principles of positive play: respect for Rules, Opponents, Officials, Teammates and Self. Each team nominated one player who best embodied these values throughout the season. This year's nominees were:

- Boys Cross Country: Evan Yurasko
- Girls Cross Country: Jase Engle
- Field Hockey: Mollie Gill
- Football: Kris Kambitsis
- Boys Golf: Coltyn Whalen
- Girls Golf: Tess Kanche
- Girls Slow-Pitch Softball: Sophia Pietragallo
- Boys Soccer: Eli Kypriotis
- Girls Soccer: Anna Bagnato
- Girls Tennis: Jackie Tang
- Girls Volleyball: Margaret Devlin

One male and one female athlete are selected from all programs for the overall Honor the Game Award. Their names are added to a perpetual plaque displayed in the Hall of Champions. This year's winners are Kris Kambitsis (football) and Mollie Gill (field hockey).

Congratulations to all the student-athletes — and a heartfelt thank-you to the coaches whose leadership, encouragement and commitment help make each season meaningful and memorable. ♥

Boys' Cross Country

Head Coach: Drew Haberberger
Assistant: Elizabeth Smith

1st Year Letter Winners

Nathanael Barnes/Lebo
Alexander Fair/Mt. Lebanon
Clark Jamison/Mt. Lebanon
Gregory Parkhitko/Mt. Lebanon
Daniel Payton/Blue Devil

2nd Year Letter Winners

Connor Battis/Blue Devil
Graham Beasley/Blue Devil
Patrick Campbell
Luke Hodgson
Bryce Spieler/Lebo
William Zadecky/Mt. Lebanon

3rd Year Letter Winners

Adrian Lupinacci/Lebo
Finn McNamee/Blue Devil
Benjamin Tan/Mt. Lebanon

4th Year Letter Winners

Evan Yurasko/Blue Devil

Girls' Cross Country

Head Coach: Oscar Shutt
Assistant: Elizabeth Smith

1st Year Letter Winners

Vienna DiPaolo/Blue Devil
Courtney Loughney/Lebo
Julia Chil/Mt. Lebanon
Chloe Winschel
Tamsin Holliday/Mt. Lebanon

2nd Year Letter Winners

Emelia Deneen/Blue Devil
Marisol Montoya/Mt. Lebanon
Jase Engle/Blue Devil
Dorothy (Chuhan) Sha/Blue Devil

3rd Year Letter Winners

Kaili Woodland/Lebo

4th Year Letter Winners

Lyra Stiglitz/Mt. Lebanon

Field Hockey

Head Coach: Brian Kattan
Assistants: Elizabeth Herb, Kayley Wogan, and Emma Jorgeson

1st Year Letter Winners

Aubrey Betler/Blue Devil
Catherine Balfe/Mt. Lebanon
Ana Bonidie/Lebo
Molly Bozick/Mt. Lebanon
Ivy Campbell/Blue Devil
Quinn Duffy/Lebo
Annaleigh Dwulit
Samantha Eaton/Lebo
Ava Giorgianni/Blue Devil
Marisol Huser/Lebo
Charlotte McCormick/Blue Devil
Adeline Monticelli/Mt. Lebanon
Eleanor Platts/Blue Devil
Olivie Skocik/Lebo

2nd Year Letter Winners

Shiloh Cowher/Blue Devil
Allie Miller/Blue Devil
Ellie Shaffer/Blue Devil
Margaret Vines/Mt. Lebanon
Madelaine Whalen/Blue Devil

3rd Year Letter Winners

Sadie Bell/Blue Devil
Mollie Gill/Blue Devil
Reese Hughes/Mt. Lebanon
Isabella Lombardi/Blue Devil
Hannah Markowitz/Mt. Lebanon

4th Year Letter Winners

Olivia Marcovitz/Lebo

Football

Head Coach: Greg Perry
Assistants: Kevin King, Jim Feeney, Don Burns, Tyler Wells, Zeke Daure, Pete Wagner, Doug McCauley, Dante DaBaldo, Tyler Perry, Zach Benedek, Chip D'Alesandro, Mike Orosz, and Evan Kelly

1st Year Letter Winners

Kai Abel/Mt. Lebanon
Gionni Colon/Mt. Lebanon
Sebastian Coriolan/Blue Devil
Alexander Dick/Blue Devil
Jaxson Driscoll
Connor Ford (Support)/Blue Devil
James Golen/Mt. Lebanon
Luis Hernandez/Blue Devil
Joshua Huff
Michael Incurvati/Blue Devil
John Kail/Mt. Lebanon
Gavin McVerry
Nolan Reddy (Support)
Ford Schmitt/Blue Devil
Jayden Sutherin
Ryker Vanderzee
Jacob Zaber/Blue Devil

2nd Year Letter Winners

Aidan Bronkar/Blue Devil
Easton Darcy/Lebo
Liam DeLuca/Lebo
Adam Hagins/Mt. Lebanon
Kevin King/Mt. Lebanon
Colin Kramer/Lebo
Henry Lahoda/Lebo
Samuel McAuley/Mt. Lebanon
Michael Murphy/Lebo
Whitaker Patriquin/Lebo
Spencer Paul/Blue Devil
Maxton Siegel/Blue Devil

3rd Year Letter Winners

Grayson Beck/Lebo
Christopher Friedel/Mt. Lebanon
Kristopher Kambitsis/Blue Devil
Jackson Kraemer/Blue Devil
Jackson Steiner/Blue Devil

4th Year Letter Winners

Joseph Malone/Mt. Lebanon
Patrick Smith/Mt. Lebanon

Boys' Golf

Head Coach: Al D'Alo
JV Coach: Mark Tallarico

1st Year Letter Winners

Garrett Cramer/Blue Devil
Jude Ege/Blue Devil
Blake Gavin/Lebo
Reed Ruggles/Blue Devil
Marko Smith/Blue Devil

2nd Year Letter Winners

Dane Barber
Max Pirain/Mt. Lebanon
Coltyn Whalen/Mt. Lebanon

3rd Year Letter Winners

Zachary Lynam/Lebo
Cooper Whalen/Blue Devil

Girls' Golf

Head Coach: Pete Bouvy
JV Coach: Ryan Dunlap

1st Year Letter Winners

Graci Harris/Blue Devil
Lucianna Stott/Blue Devil

2nd Year Letter Winners

Chelsey Campbell/Blue Devil
Lucille Kanche/Lebo
Alexandra Larocca/Mt. Lebanon

4th Year Letter Winners

Teresa Kanche/Lebo

Boys' Soccer

Head Coach: Mike Gullo
Assistants: Brian Luchini, Ron Wilcher, and Bill Shank

1st Year Letter Winners

Conner Baird/Mt. Lebanon
Owen Byrne/Blue Devil
Davi Cavalcanti/Blue Devil
Lorenzo Danley/Blue Devil
Brady Gullo/Blue Devil
James Havas/Mt. Lebanon
Milo Hoover/Blue Devil
Sid Jain/Mt. Lebanon
Adrian Limon/Lebo
Brady Lowe/Mt. Lebanon
Samuel Maxim/Blue Devil
DJ McKay/Blue Devil
Eamonn Nagle/Blue Devil
Michael Payner/Blue Devil
Miko Perkovich/Lebo
Moses Perkovich/Lebo
Grayson Stuart/Lebo
Charles Taylor/Lebo
Maclain Trant/Blue Devil
Santiago Yamunaque

2nd Year Letter Winners

Caleb Campanaro/Mt. Lebanon
Ignatios Darakos/Mt. Lebanon
Rory Doran/Blue Devil
Camden Forquer/Mt. Lebanon
Jonathan Frew/Lebo
Liam Frey
Aaron Henck/Blue Devil
Elias Kypriotis/Blue Devil
Simon Marks/Lebo
Mateo Montoya/Blue Devil

3rd Year Letter Winners

Noah Defeo/Lebo
Victor Slack
Benton Thompson/Blue Devil

Girls' Soccer

Head Coach: Seth Young
Assistants: Sharon Sumansky, Rob Heuler, Dori Oldaker, and Melissa Dalbon

1st Year Letter Winners

Anna Bagnato/Mt. Lebanon
Lilia Bhuta/Blue Devil

Penelope Hoover/Blue Devil

Laurel Huzzard/Blue Devil
Riley Kramer
Avery Kripke/Mt. Lebanon
Anastasia Lombardi/Mt. Lebanon
Miro Lombardi/Mt. Lebanon
Ashley Lust/Mt. Lebanon
Scarlett Pryor/Blue Devil
Ava Silva/Blue Devil
Vivienne Slack/Lebo

2nd Year Letter Winners

Emma Curren/Mt. Lebanon
Elizabeth Dungleinon/Blue Devil
Ella Harkiewicz/Blue Devil
Caitlyn Horgan/Blue Devil
Addyson Papalia/Lebo
Kianna Patrick/Mt. Lebanon
Caroline Rost/Mt. Lebanon
Carys Rowles/Mt. Lebanon
Liliane Schaeerli/Mt. Lebanon
Makenna Tappe/Blue Devil

3rd Year Letter Winners

Rebecca Braunsdorf/Mt. Lebanon
Madeline Knowles/Blue Devil

4th Year Letter Winners

Ava Heidenreich/Blue Devil
Lucy Pryor/Blue Devil

Girls' Softball (Slow Pitch)

Head Coach: Leo Orelli
Assistants: John Morgan, Ed Masilunas, and John Naylor

1st Year Letter Winners

Ellie Blanton
Abigail Cerci
Paige Drummond
Olivia Marcovitz/Lebo
Grace Masilunas
Charlotte Moore/Blue Devil
Sophia Pietragallo/Lebo
Emma Rupprecht/Blue Devil

2nd Year Letter Winners

Hayden Orelli/Blue Devil
Breanna Pitassi

4th Year Letter Winners

Kimberly Naylor/Blue Devil

Girls' Tennis

Head Coach: Tim Sullivan
JV Coach: Janine Johns

1st Year Letter Winners

Amelia Duncan/Mt. Lebanon
Lily Farrell/Blue Devil
Zoey Guo/Blue Devil
London Nzambi/Blue Devil
Margaret Offenbach/Blue Devil
Sydney Ogoreuc/Mt. Lebanon

2nd Year Letter Winners

Hayden Maher/Blue Devil
Maya Tatel/Blue Devil

3rd Year Letter Winners

Alejandra Garcia/Lebo
Maggie Meehan/Blue Devil
Sarah Stroh/Mt. Lebanon

4th Year Letter Winners

Jacquelyn Tang/Mt. Lebanon
Michelle Yang/Blue Devil

Girls Volleyball

Head Coach: Erin Mooney
JV Coach: Luciana Polk
Assistants: Riley Young and Julie D'Alo

1st Year Letter Winners

Aven Brantley/Lebo
Alana D'Alo/Blue Devil
Margaret Devlin/Mt. Lebanon
Lila Gaetano/Lebo
Madeleine Horgan/Blue Devil
Claire Kiley/Blue Devil
Clare Mooney/Blue Devil
Piper Schultz/Lebo
Rainiah Turnbull/Lebo

2nd Year Letter Winners

Leah Clougherty/Blue Devil
Maya Gelman/Blue Devil
Stella Moore/Mt. Lebanon
Isabella Shane/Blue Devil
Colbi Wilson/Blue Devil

3rd Year Letter Winners

Lillian Beasley/Blue Devil
Tessa Hoover/Blue Devil

4th Year Letter Winners

Lucy McCord/Lebo
Keira Palmer/Blue Devil



2025 Fall "Honor the Game" Award recipients Mollie Gill (field hockey) and Kris Kambitsis (football). (Photo provided by the Mt. Lebanon Sports Department)



Police Beat

The Mt. Lebanon Police Department reported the following crime incidents over the past 28 days: 10/19-11/15.

Harassment/Physical Strike Kick
600 Block Washington Road

Retail Theft-Take Merchandise, Enhanced Grading, 1st or 2nd Offense and Value \$150 Or More
300 Block Castle Shannon Blvd

Institutional Vandalism, Educ Facility, Govt Building, Etc.
500 Block Washington Road

DUI
1600 Block McFarland Rd

Theft by Unlawful Taking, Movable, From Building, Amount Taken Equals or Exceeds \$200
400 Block Marlin Drive

Theft from a Motor Vehicle, Value is Less Than \$50.00
200 Block Sleepy Hollow Road

Access Device Fraud-Use Another's Device Without Authorization-Enhanced Grading
100 Block Academy Avenue

DUI
Parker Drive & Osage Road

Access Device Fraud, Use Counterfeit/Altered Device, Enhanced Grading, Value Is \$500 or More
200 Block Lebanon Avenue

Resisting Arrest
500 Block Washington Road

Simple Assault-General
000 Block Bower Hill Road

Access Device Fraud-Use Another's Device Without Authorization, Enhanced Grading
000 Block Academy Drive

Discharge Firearm into Occupied Structure
700 Block Buchanan Place

Use/Possession Drug Paraphernalia
100 Block Cochrane Road

Altered, Forged or Counterfeit Documents and Plates
Washington Road & McFarland Road

DUI
Beverly Road & Sieaforth Avenue

Propulsion of Missiles into Occupied Vehicle
500 Block Carnegie Road

Access Device Fraud, Use Counterfeit/Altered Device-Enhanced Grading, Value Is \$500 or More
400 Block Mapleton

Criminal Mischief, Paint or Marker, Basic Charge-\$500 Or Less
100 Block Alfred Street

Theft of Service, By Deception of Intention to Pay, Amount Taken \$50 or Less
600 Block Washington Road

Identity Theft Basic Charge, less Than \$2000
500 Block Lyndhurst Avenue

Theft by Deception, False Impression, Amount Taken Was More Than \$50.00 And Less Than \$200
200 Block Buchanan Place

Theft by Deception, False Impression, Amount Taken Exceeds \$2,000
200 Block Parker Drive

Criminal Mischief, Damage Real or Personal Property, Enhanced Grading, Intentional
800 Block Old Hickory Road

Possession of a Controlled or Counterfeit Substance by Unauthorized Person
1000 Block Kelton Avenue

Simple Assault, General
000 Block Shady Drive W

Indecent Exposure
Washington Road & McFarland Road

Lebo football *Continued from page 10*

finished last season thinking, 'Oh, well, I still have another season to play and get better,' but I never even ended up being able to practice, so I really wish I took advantage of the three years I had prior."

During his time with the program, Beck learned how to face adversity. The Class of 2026 seniors had three coaches in three years, forcing them to adapt to new systems and personalities.

"That situation taught me how to adapt and stay disciplined no matter the circumstances," Beck said. "I know the challenges we faced here will help guide me through college."

Senior defensive end Jackson Kramer will attend Villanova University next fall. He chose Villanova for its mix of football, academics and faith — something

he said was very important to him. He credits Lebo football for preparing him for the next level.

"I'm most excited about the academics and the opportunity to meet new people," Kramer said. "Lebo football has helped shape me as a player through its rigorous program. I've grown so much as a person, and I've learned a lot about life just by playing football."

While the four players will head in different directions next fall, they share deep gratitude for the memories and lessons learned as part of Mt. Lebanon's football tradition.

"Always have fun," Smith said. "There's really not much time to play high school football, so when you have the chance to play, enjoy the

game you love with the people you love. Going hard at everything you do and taking pride in your actions will lead to success down the line."

Kramer agreed, adding that the relationships he built through football are ones he'll cherish forever.

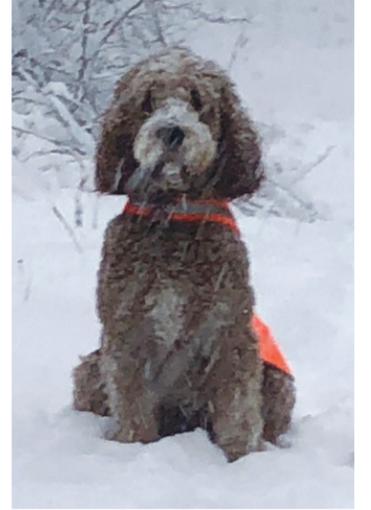
Malone echoed the sentiment, saying the senior season meant everything to him as both a player and a person.

"It's been about brotherhood and creating those relationships that go far beyond football," Malone said. "It's crazy to think it's finally over — that I've played my last game with these boys I've grown up with. We've put in so much together over the years, and knowing it's come to an end is emotional, but it's also something I'll never forget." ♥

Bark Beat

Celebrating Mt. Lebanon's beloved dogs

Meet Murphy



Murphy is an Irish Doodle – Irish setter & poodle mix.

- 🐾 My favorite humans are Gerry & Joanne and all the nice people next door that give me treats.
- 🐾 My favorite toy is my stuffed fish!
- 🐾 My favorite treat is dried pig ears.
- 🐾 My favorite thing to do besides eating and sleeping is to be off leash in the forest hiking with my owners.
- 🐾 My humans think I am special because I am exuberant and fun loving.

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